



National Aeronautics and
Space Administration

Tibetan Plateau





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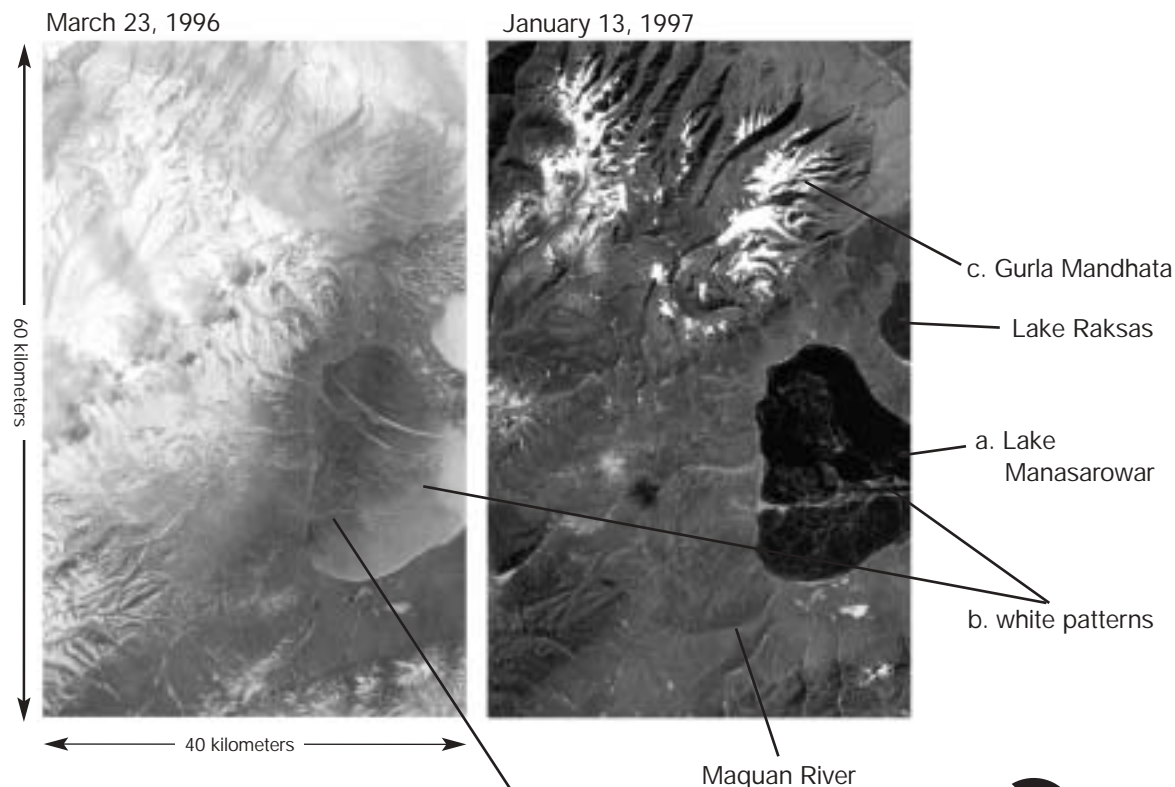


Latitude: 30.5° N **Longitude:** 81.7° E
Date: March, 23 1996 (left), January 13, 1997 (right)
Image ID #: STS076.ESC.00212429 (left),
STS081.ESC.00212631 (right)

These images of Lake Manasarowar (a) on the Tibetan Plateau illustrate how images from space can show changes in weather. Taken on different Shuttle flights and cropped to show the same area, the pair of images reveals the impact of weather on the region.

Tibet has a cold, dry climate, making it one of the harshest places to live. The average annual temperature is 1 °C (34 °F), and temperatures in the mountains and plateaus are especially cold. Most of the rainfall occurs between June and September, when temperatures are slightly warmer. Strong winds are common year-round. The March 1996 image shows large amounts of snow that fell during unusually strong blizzards in the previous months. The January 1997 image shows a more typical dry and cold winter.

At an altitude of 4,727 m (15,510 ft), Lake Manasarowar is one of the highest freshwater lakes in the world. Lake Manasarowar's water supply comes from glaciers on the Himalayan peak Gurla Mandhata (c) and the Kailash Range. Both images capture interesting white patterns (b) in the lake. These cracked patterns form when slabs of ice, pushed by wind, collide with one another. Drifting snow can then accumulate at the junctions.



Why is there less
snow around
the lake?

Why is one side
of the lake bluer
than the other?

Additional information:
ISS EarthKAM images and lessons:
<http://www.earthkam.ucsd.edu>
NASA Spacelink:
<http://spacelink.nasa.gov>